

## CHAPTER 21

### HOST COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT TOURISTS: THE CASE OF DIDIM, TURKEY

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#### **Abstract**

The phenomenon of northern Europeans retiring to southern European is not new, numerous communities of ‘permanent tourists’ having been established by those seeking a better climate or migrating for economic, health and other life-style factors. Consequently, such tourist-migration and its associated impacts on local society and culture in destination areas has long explored in the academic literature. Nevertheless, one country yet to benefit from academic scrutiny in this context is Turkey; despite there being more than 110,000 foreign-owned properties (35,249 British-owned) in Turkey, the issue is relatively untouched. Not only has second-home ownership in the country in general been overlooked, but little if any attention has been paid to interactions between permanent tourists and local host communities in particular. The purpose of this chapter is to address this significant gap in the literature. Drawing on research undertaken amongst stakeholders in the second-home property sector in Didim, Turkey, it explores local people’s perceptions of and responses to permanent tourists, focusing in particular on issues related to the extent of their integration and cultural exchange with the local community. A number of themes emerged from the research, not least transformations in the market for second homes reflecting over supply and diminishing international demand, suggesting more effective management of the sector is required. More specifically, the local community was found to hold generally positive perceptions of permanent tourists although the relationship between the two groups was revealed to be no less superficial than that between local people and ‘normal’ tourists. Significantly, however, local people’s views of permanent tourists were influenced by their political and religious beliefs whilst, overall, both practical (language) barriers and differing life-style expectations served to limit integration between the two communities.

**Keywords:** Tourist migration; permanent tourist; second homes; host perceptions

## **Introduction**

The phenomenon of northern Europeans retiring to southern Europe is not new (Dwyer 2002; King, Warnes & Williams 2000). Residents of colder, northern European countries have long sought to migrate south to warmer climates although, until the latter years of the twentieth century, few people had the means to do so. However, reflecting broader political-economic transformations, the last three decades have witnessed remarkable growth in north-south migration within Europe. For example, in 1990 an estimated 62,069 British expatriates were living in Spain; by 2103, this figure had risen to 381,025 (Royal Statistical Society (RSS) 2014).

A variety of factors have underpinned this contemporary manifestation of mobility, not least the more general desire of Western populations to live in warmer climates (Cohen 2008). At the same time, the image of the country or destination (often previously visited on holiday), the opportunity to buy a larger or more luxurious home in a country with lower property prices and the attraction of a lower cost of living have all driven its growth. Hence, a number of commentators refer to this phenomenon as lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly 2009a; Cohen, Duncan & Thulemark 2015; Torkington 2012) or mobility based upon people's 'belief that there is a more fulfilling way of life available to them elsewhere' (Benson & O'Reilly 2009b). Yet, such lifestyle migration is a broad concept. It embraces not only those seeking to retire elsewhere but also younger people looking for a 'new life'; equally, it includes both permanent and semi-permanent migrants. Therefore, it is often considered within the broader context of tourism and second-home ownership, an issue that has long attracted attention within the academic literature (Coppock 1977; Hall & Müller 2004; Hall & Williams 2002; Helderman, Ham & Mulder 2006; Jaakson 1986; Müller 2004).

Irrespective of the nature of and motives for this north-south migration within Europe, however, it is typically manifested in the development of often substantial communities of what are referred to here as permanent or semi-permanent tourists in destination areas. It is not surprising, therefore, that such tourist-migration and its associated impacts on local society and culture in destination areas has long been explored in the academic literature (for example, Girard & Gartner 1993; Helderman et al. 2006; Marjavara 2007, 2009; O'Reilly 2003, 2007). It is also not surprising that, in the southern European context (significant research has also been undertaken in Scandinavian countries where there exists an established tradition of second home ownership) much of the research has focused predominantly on

Spain (for example, Haug, Dann & Mehmetoglu 2007; Rodriguez 2001) and to a lesser extent France (Benson 2010). What is surprising, perhaps, is that one country yet to benefit from academic scrutiny in this context is Turkey. Despite there being evidence of increasing overseas property ownership in the country, particularly in or near popular holiday destinations, 'the issue remains relatively untouched' (International Strategic Research Organisation (ISRO) 2008). Indeed, not only has second-home ownership in the country in general been overlooked but little, if any, attention has been paid to interactions between permanent tourists and local host communities in particular.

More specifically, research undertaken by Bahar, Laciner, Bal and Özcan (2009) reveals that growing numbers of British, Scandinavian and German tourists have in recent years started to buy properties in Turkey for the purposes of both extended holidays / semi-migration and for retirement. The demand is clearly illustrated by official data from Turkey's Land Registry Directorate's Foreigner Affairs Unit, cited by Wallwork (2011: 1):

...British [and] German are the top foreign buyers of property in Turkey. Foreign buyers from 89 countries have purchased approximately 111,200 properties across Turkey. British people are the most prolific buyers with 35,249 British people owning 24,848 properties, followed by Germany and Greece.

In other words, there is clear evidence of significant and growing demand, principally amongst central and northern Europeans, in purchasing properties in Turkey. This, in turn, suggests that the need exists for systematic research into the phenomenon, particularly given the potential scale of overseas ownership of properties in Turkey. Indeed, this need has already been recognised within Turkey; according to the International Strategic Research Organisation (ISRO) in Turkey, sponsored by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) 'There are many scholarly studies of settled migrants in several Mediterranean countries like Spain, Greece, Italy and Malta. Yet, the issue remains relatively untouched in the case of Turkey' (ISRO 2008: 2). Hence, an initial project entitled *Integration of Settled Foreigners in Turkey with the Turkish Community: Issues and Opportunities* was undertaken by ISRO. It was, however, based primarily on quantitative data collection and, as a consequence, the study concluded that:

There is not a clear understanding of the 'settled foreigners' concept amongst the Turkish public. A sophisticated understanding regarding the issue does not exist, either.

Not only are settled foreigners perceived as a homogenous group, but also their reasons for coming to the country, their needs and their interests are perceived as common (ISRO 2008: 7).

Thus, despite some initial work, there remains a lack of knowledge and understanding of the consequences of increasing international tourist-migration into Turkey and, in particular, how this is perceived by local residents in areas where permanent tourist communities have become established. The purpose of this chapter is to address this significant gap in the literature. Drawing on research undertaken amongst stakeholders in the second-home property sector in Didim, Turkey, it explores local people's perceptions of and responses to permanent tourists, focusing in particular on issues related to the extent of their integration and cultural exchange with the local community. In so doing, it seeks to contribute to the tourist migration / second home literature in general and understanding of the permanent tourist phenomenon in Turkey in particular. The first task, however, is to review briefly the concept of the 'permanent tourist' and understandings of so-called host-guest relations as a framework for the subsequent research.

### **Permanent tourists: towards a definition**

As observed above, a number of terms are employed in the literature to describe the phenomenon of people migrating overseas to live in properties purchased as either their principal or second home, including: "lifestyle migration" (Benson & O'Reilly 2009a); "lifestyle mobility" (Cohen et al. 2015), "retirement migration" (King et al. 2000) and, more generally, second home ownership (Hall & Müller 2004). Similarly, these migrants are variously referred to as, for example, "lifestyle migrants" (Benson & O'Reilly 2009b), "residential tourists" (O'Reilly 2003, 2007) or "settled foreigners" (ISRO 2008; Bahar et al. 2009).

For the purposes of this study, however, the term "permanent tourist" is employed in order to differentiate the target group (those migrating from other countries to retire in Turkey) from other types of migrants referred to in the above definitions, such as temporary tourists, semi-permanent migrants or those migrating to live and work in Turkey. The term 'permanent tourists' is adopted from Cohen (1974: 537) who defines these individuals as 'persons who, though deriving their income in their country of origin, prefer to take up semi-permanent residence in another country'. Here, the main emphasis is on the fact that permanent tourists

are not working in the host country, the principal basis for differentiating the phenomenon of permanent tourists from, for example, residential tourists and lifestyle migration. However, also in this study the duration of permanent tourists' residence in the destination is considered to involve relatively longer periods of time than temporary tourists whilst socio-cultural self-identification as permanent tourists, irrespective of whether they own their property or not, is also a factor.

### **Host-guest relations and host perceptions of tourism**

Given the nature of tourism, it is almost inevitable that tourists meet and interact with members of local community in the destination or, more succinctly, that a relationship exists between local people as "hosts" and tourists as "guests". The nature of that relationship varies according to a number of factors, not least the role of the host (de Kadt 1979; Sutton 1967) but, significantly, it has long been claimed that a balanced or harmonious relationship between hosts and guests is of fundamental importance to the success of tourism (Zhang, Inbakaran & Jackson 2006). Putting it another way, the development of tourism inevitably incurs some degree of impact on the local environment and society and that, should members of the local community perceive the costs of tourism to outweigh the benefits they receive, they may withdraw their support for tourism (Lawson, Williams, Young & Cossens 1998). That is, a "happy host" (Snaith & Hailey 1999) is essential to the successful development of tourism and, hence, not only is important to ensure the positive outcomes of tourism to the host community are optimised (and costs minimised), but that the 'voices' of the local community inform tourism planning and management.

Consequently, host community perceptions of tourism have been a popular and enduring focus of research or what McGehee and Anderek (2004: 132) describe as 'one of the most systematic and well-studied areas of tourism'. A comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this chapter (see, for example, Deery, Jago & Fredline 2012; Easterling 2004; Harrill 2004; Nunkoo, Smith & Ramkissoon 2013; Sharpley 2014) although a number of key points are of relevance here, not least the fact that over the last three decades the research has evolved significantly in terms of scope, theoretical underpinning and conceptual design. Indeed, since Ap (1990) lamented the narrow, descriptive nature of the then research, much of which typically reflected a 'tourism impact' focus (McGehee & Anderek 2004: 132) that identifies and describes local communities' experiences of and responses to tourism's economic, social and environmental impacts, and tourism perceptions has been increasingly adopted. Within

this broader perspective, the research has developed along two distinctive but related paths. First, significant attention has been paid to identifying, measuring and comparing the variables which may determine the local community's perceptions of tourism, such variables being both intrinsic to the individual and extrinsic, or related to the destination community as a whole (Faulkner & Tideswell 1997). However, as Andriotis and Vaughan (2003) note, these variables-based studies tend to view the local community as homogeneous; that is, they overlook the potential for different groups or clusters within destination communities to have varying perceptions of tourism. Hence, the second research path has focused on segmentation or cluster analysis (for example, Fredline & Faulkner 2000; Pérez & Nadal 2005). In addition, recent studies have explored local community perceptions within the broader context of residents' quality of life/well-being (Andereck & Nyaupane 2011; Kim, Uysal & Sirgy 2013) whilst attempts have also been made, albeit unconvincingly (Pearce, Moscardo & Ross 1996), to apply theoretical frameworks, particularly social action theory, to the research.

Nevertheless, the host perceptions research continues to suffer a number of limitations (Deery et al. 2012; Sharpley 2014). Typically, for example, it is based on 'one-off' case studies, most usually in the developed world (much of the research emanates from North America), and often focuses on domestic tourism in untypical destinations (Nunkoo & Gursoy 2012). Hence, not only have larger mainstream international tourism destinations been excluded, but the validity and generalizability of outcomes is limited (Huh & Vogt 2008). At the same time, not only does the research focus on perceptions of rather than responses to tourism, but studies that explore the local community's perception of and interaction with tourists themselves are relatively rare. However, the research is most criticized for the predominant use of quantitative methods which, according to some, renders the outcomes simplistic and theoretically fragile (Woosnam 2012); the research is unable to explain or predict local community perceptions or responses to tourism. Or, as Moufakkir and Reisinger (2013: xiii) observe 'perception studies tend to reduce the reality of the ... [host] ... gaze to what is visible; yet we know what is visible is not the whole truth.' As a consequence, it has been suggested that a multi-dimensional, qualitative approach should be adopted that, in general, has the potential to explain not only how but why the local community perceives and responds to tourism (Deery et al. 2012); that is, to reveal more of, if not the "whole truth". As the chapter now discusses, the research amongst the local community in this study was, thus, based on qualitative methods in order to elicit a deeper, more nuanced picture of their perceptions of permanent tourists.

## **The research**

As noted in the introduction, the research was undertaken in Didim, a small town and located on the Aegean coast in the Western part of Turkey. It was selected for the research as not only is it a popular tourism destination but also because it is home to an established community of international permanent tourists. According to Turkey's Office of National Statistics (TUIK 2016), Didim's population increased from 42,266 in 2007 to 73,000 in 2015, primarily as a consequence of incoming migration. This growth includes both domestic and international migration. Although according to a newspaper report, in 2016 British migrants accounted for 25% of the town's population (Londra Gazete 2016).

Given the specific purpose of the research to explore critically the local community's perceptions of permanent tourists, respondents were purposefully sampled from the local Turkish community in Didim. They were identified and contacted through the first author's existing contacts and, in total, thirteen members of the local community participated in the research including representatives of different age groups as well as people who had either been born and always lived in Didim or who had lived in the town for at least ten years. The sample also included a mix of genders and political backgrounds as well as different professions, including stakeholders in the second home property sector, local government officials, the religious community (e.g. imams), the coach of a local football team and other businessmen and workers from the region.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted (in Turkish) during August 2013. Each interview took approximately 50 to 60 minutes; all interviews were, with the respondents' consent, digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed and translated into English.

As observed above, previous host perception research is considered to be limited by the predominant employment of quantitative data collection methods. Hence, the use of qualitative interviews sought to generate a deeper understanding of the local community's perceptions and experiences of permanent tourists in Didim (McGregor & Murnane 2010; Silverman 2006). As discussed in the remainder of the chapter, this approach indeed yielded rich data with respect to the local community's perceptions of permanent tourists, of their expectations and level of adaptation to and integration with the host community in Didim.

## **Research outcomes**

### *General perceptions of permanent tourists*

From the interviews, a number of broad findings emerged which suggest that the local community in Didim have generally positive perceptions of permanent tourists in their town. From a practical perspective, there was a belief amongst most respondents that the majority of 'outsiders' buying properties in Didim are primarily British people aged over fifty and, to a lesser extent, Turkish retirees, with both being from lower income groups. The respondents were also of the opinion that most of these now permanent tourists had previously holidayed in the region before deciding to buy a property there, and that the main reasons for British migrants choosing Didim is that housing there is relatively cheap compared with other touristic regions in Turkey. At the same time, they also felt that the small size of the town and its relaxed atmosphere also attracted permanent tourists.

More specifically, the respondents claimed that although they recognized that the culture of the permanent tourists is dissimilar to their own, they are nevertheless happy to host them. This, perhaps, reflects generally positive attitudes towards tourism (both seasonal and permanent) and, in particular, its contribution to the local economy in Didim. For example, many local businesses have responded to opportunities offered by the British community; prices are displayed in British currency and products such as fish and chips are widely available. Indeed, a local Turkish bakery produces steak and kidney pies for the foreign residents. Hence, all respondents, including those who were not working in the tourism industry, were positively disposed towards British permanent tourists and expressed no negative opinions.

Such an outcome is unsurprising; research has long revealed a correlation between economic benefits / dependency and positive attitudes towards tourism (Pizam 1978; Brougham & Butler 1981). Equally unsurprising was evident concern amongst respondents regarding the increase in the number of property developments in Didim in response to the demand from permanent tourists, an increase that has, they felt, degraded the environment. Interestingly, however, many respondents expressed the view that this problem has arisen because of poor practice on the part of property developers rather than because of permanent tourists themselves; that is, the local community do not "blame" the permanent tourists for the excessive property development.



Indeed, the respondents also claimed that the number of permanent tourists living in Didim has fallen in recent years, resulting in another interesting outcome from the study with regards to the manner in which the local community has taken advantage of the surplus supply of cheap buildings. In most other case studies from around the Mediterranean, the influx of permanent tourists has tended to lead to an increase in house prices and the costs of products and services (Benson & O'Reilly 2009a; Helderma et al. 2006; Hall & Müller 2004; O'Reilly 2003, 2007; King et al. 2000). In the past, this also occurred in Didim. In recent years, however, and perhaps as a consequence of the 2008 global financial crisis, international demand for homes in the town demand has reduced. As a consequence, surplus properties are now being bought by Turkish nationals from outside of the local area. These changes have impacted on existing permanent tourists / second-home owners as it seems to have emphasized the divisions between the two communities and created pressures owing to the different expectations of permanent tourists and the increasing Turkish population. Further research intends to investigate this issue more deeply but, following the objectives of this study, a number of more specific findings emerged from this study.

### ***Permanent tourists: impacts on society, culture and religion***

As noted above, despite recognized cultural differences, most interviewees were positive about British permanent tourists in Didim. Indeed, some suggested that the presence of British permanent tourists improved the social life of the local community, with many migrants involving themselves in and supporting the wider community by, for example, setting up charitable organisations and supporting the poor in the region.

Others, however, commented that social and cultural changes had occurred owing to the presence of British permanent tourists, particularly in the lifestyle of local Turkish families. Specifically, they suggested that British permanent tourists needed to be more aware of the host culture, particularly towards younger people who, some respondents suggested, are more susceptible to foreign influences or acculturation. More generally, the main criticism of permanent tourists related to their perceived excessive alcohol consumption and the consequential social issues such as neighbours being too noisy and being disrespectful towards the host community. Indeed, the perceived general pattern of behaviour of some, if not all, permanent tourists (for example, socialising outdoors with other permanent tourists, frequent and excessive drinking, and being noisy and carefree within sight and hearing of their Turkish neighbours) gives the local community the impression that even though they are

permanent home owners / residents in Didim, they behave no differently from temporary visitors on extended holidays.

Overall, however, the research revealed no consensus as to how the presence of permanent tourists was perceived to influence or impact upon the social lives of the local community. That is, opposing viewpoints were often expressed by respondents; even the local religious community offered different opinions, the town's two imams (both of whom participated in interviews) holding differing views British permanent tourists in Didim. For example:

***Extract 1:***

*Interviewer:* What do you think about these people who bought property here? What type of needs do they have here and what should be done in response?

*Respondent 4:* now... I have information about that when we compare England and here. I have been told that [here] we allow them more freedom than in England. For example, I heard that while they drink like that in England they can't go shopping or walk around the streets very comfortably in England and make people uncomfortable but here they behave very comfortably while they are drunk.

*Interviewer:* Do you think they have been given too much freedom here?

*Respondent 4:* Yes, too much freedom. I always hear that. [They have] been given too much. This is what I see and this is what I heard all the time. These things can make us uncomfortable and unhappy with this behaviour because they influence for our families and children negatively.

The other imam, however, emphasized that these differences should be seen as adding cultural richness to local society rather than bringing about social change or problems:

***Extract 2:***

*Interviewer:* Do you think there have been any cultural changes in the region? [since British permanent tourists arrived?]

*Respondent 3:* No there haven't been any cultural changes [since they arrived]. I believe and see that this brings more cultural richness into our society.

One of the interesting points to emerge from these exchanges is that even though both imams are religious leaders within the same community, their perceptions of international permanent tourists vary significantly. One explanation may be that one respondent claims that he was told by some British tourists about cultural life in Britain and hence, came to conclusions about their behaviour in Turkey. In other words, it is important to note that residents' perceptions are influenced by their own socio- cultural environment. Here, the respondent's individual social relations with British permanent tourists and the knowledge he has thereby gained appear to have influenced his perceptions. This supports Pearce et al's (1996) criticism of social exchange theory, often used to frame research into host community perceptions of tourism, that residents' perceptions are often derived socially rather than from individual knowledge.

Another respondent claims that there are few if any differences in the attitudes and observed behaviour of the British permanent tourist community and that of many local people. Consequently, for this respondent, the British population does not cause any problems:

***Extract 3:***

*Interviewer:* Turkey is mainly Muslim while the British are from a Christian culture; does this cause any cultural clashes or issues?

*Respondent 10:* No, there aren't any clashes or issues [related to this] because Turkey is not like that. For example, last month we had Ramadan. Some local people were fasting and praying but others were also drinking [alcohol] and going to entertainment areas [bars]. So we can't have any clash with English people because our own nationals also drink alcohol; they do the same things as English people usually do ... So our nation drinks like them. Everyone lives their own religion the way they want to.

This response points to the fact that Turkey is not a typical Muslim nation; its society being culturally and socially polarised owing to Turkey's secular structure which has been established since 1923 (Yashin 2002; Lewis 1955, 1996).

Varying and opposing perceptions were also expressed by other respondents with regards to aspects of permanent tourists' presence and behaviour in Didim, as now discussed

### ***Perceptions of permanent tourists' adaptation to local life***

Adaptation is a difficult concept to measure as like any other form of social behaviour, adaptation as relative and viewpoints change depending on who is being interviewed and behaviour is multidirectional and multidimensional (Moufakkir & Reisinger 2013; Griffiths & Sharpley 2012). Nevertheless, respondents generally expressed the belief that most permanent tourists showed little signs of adaptation to the host culture. However, this did not appear to be an issue for many respondents because they not expect British permanent tourists to adapt to the local lifestyle; they believed that because most permanent tourists were aged over fifty, adapting to the host culture would be difficult for them. Some respondents also commented that there were in fact some permanent tourists who had adapted, but these reflected the individual's personal circumstances, such as marriage to a member of the local community.

Having said that, most respondents stated that in terms of general lifestyle, such as shopping habits, eating local cuisine and other everyday activities, British permanent tourists have learnt how to live in Didim alongside the local community locals but did so in their own manner. For example, it was revealed in the interviews that permanent tourists go to the local village Pazar (open village market) and had learnt practical behaviour, such as taking sufficient small change with them to the market, just like locals. Conversely, the expectations of some members of the local community differ from those of permanent tourists; they had greater expectations and, hence, were more critical of permanent tourists:

#### **Extract 4:**

*Interviewer:* What do you think about these people who bought property here? What type of needs do they have here and what should be done in response?

*Respondent 9:* First of all, when English people settle in other countries, they should have learnt about their [hosts'] culture. Secondly, if they come to my country I believe that they should learn at least a basic level of our language in order to cope.

*Interviewer:* So you are saying they do not learn the native language?

*Respondent 9:* Look, these people don't. For example, Gordon Miller [Football coach] lived in Turkey for nine years and did not speak a word.... Even I tried to adapt to them; I tried to speak with them in English, like "good, hello"... because we live in

same residence with English people. I do not understand them. What type of problem do they have not learning the our language?... They are extremely nationalistic! Why do they think they are better than anybody else? Why they do not learn the basic native language, especially when they want to live here?

However, another respondent had a completely different perception about the English community in Didim. He said that he has English friends because he visits English bars to hear their stories and that he has known some of them for ten years.

**Extract 5:**

*Interviewer:* So do you have a good friendship [with them]?

*Respondent 8:* Yes, English people are known for being cold but they are not... In most cases, English people's relations with local people are good, socially and culturally. Most English people interact with locals and go to restaurants and bring money to local businesses. They are integrating with locals. They don't separate themselves from locals or create their own enclaves.

*Interviewer:* What do you think about their culture? Are they different from local people?

*Respondent 8:* They are culturally different from us. We are a Muslim nation.

*Interviewer:* Do you think this causes problems?

*Respondent 8:* No, definitely not. That does not cause any problems. People should respect each other and their differences. You can be a non-believer or Christian or Muslim; you need to respect that.

*Interviewer:* Shall we say that the English population here do not cause any cultural problems?

*Respondent 8:* Yes, certainly. They do not cause any cultural problems here. Apart from that they are contributing to the local economy.

*Interviewer:* Very briefly I was wondering who adapts to whom in Didim? What do you think?

*Respondent 8:* No one adapts to anyone. Everybody lives in their own way. If we think about it then the English community are more likely adapt here.

*Interviewer:* Do they learn Turkish?

*Respondent 8:* No they don't. Especially English community are like that....They do not learn Turkish. They are very certain on that.

*Interviewer:* Do you think because they think it is not easy for them to learn?

*Respondent 8:* I know some of them tried [to learn it] but most of them do not want to learn Turkish.

To summarise the above respondent's view, British and local Turkish people get on well with and accept each other. The British community are willing to learn the local lifestyle but language is an issue; they do not learn it. It is interesting to see that both Extracts 4 and 5 mentioned Gordon Miller, a British football coach who lived and worked in Turkey for years and who did not learn any Turkish. It is important to state that these perceptions may be influenced by their own individual experiences or socially, such as through the national media or the role of one famous person.

### ***Local perceptions of close friendship with permanent tourists***

Most respondents indicated that they did not have close friendships with permanent tourists, primarily because of the language barrier. Some hosts felt that permanent tourists did not want to have deeper social contact because of their lack of effort to learn the language. Respondent 5, an elderly Turkish woman, revealed that even though one permanent tourist had lived in the same apartment block for four years, their British neighbour (who is of the same age and gender) has never learnt any Turkish and whenever they had a problem in the apartment they had to provide a translator.

### **Extract 6:**

*Interviewer:* What do you think about their [permanent tourists] social and cultural life in here?

*Respondent 5:* My neighbour, I don't think she has any social life ... she walks around by herself and then goes to bed. Hello or good morning is all she has to say or to learn these two words not more but she cannot speak a word ...

*Interviewer:* So you are saying that she has been living with you for two years but she can't speak a single word of Turkish?

*Respondent 5:* No 4 years by now, and all she has to learned are two words and asks [me] how are you? But she couldn't... It is important to learn other culture's language, especially if you are living with them

Interestingly, however, most respondents did consider not learning the local language an issue. Indeed, most did not expect permanent tourists to do so. Rather, most local people put more effort into speaking English to accommodate the permanent tourists. For example, Respondent 7 stated that Didim's local government used to send bills in English to British permanent tourists.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, then, despite living permanently in Didim, most permanent tourists enjoy only superficial relationships with the local community, the principal reason being the language barrier. Many respondents were critical about the lack of desire on the part of permanent tourists to learn Turkish yet they nevertheless felt that permanent tourists have made an effort to learn learnt how to live in the location, particularly with regards to obtaining goods and services. At the same time, however, these superficial relationships may reflect differing lifestyle expectations between the two groups; certainly, the research suggested that although some local people make an effort to interact with and get to know the migrant community, permanent tourists appear less willing to engage with the indigenous community. Generally, however, the situation is summed up by one respondent: 'No one adapts to anyone; everybody lives in their own way.'

Nevertheless, and despite the cultural differences between them, almost all respondents expressed the view that they are very happy to host British permanent tourists in Didim. Indeed, given their demographic characteristics (specifically, their age), permanent tourists are not expected to adapt to the local culture and society; the local community is happy to accept them, in a sense, as permanent 'outsiders'. In other words, though residing permanently in Didim, permanent tourists often behave similarly to season tourists, but this appears to be generally accepted by the local community, perhaps because of the recognised economic benefits. However, reflecting their individual political and religious beliefs, the research did reveal differing perceptions on the part of respondents. In other words, the research suggests that it is difficult to generalise the perceptions of the local community with regards to permanent tourists, though it may be concluded that as no overall negative perceptions emerged from the interviews, local people are generally happy to accept the 'status quo' of the two culturally and socially distinctive communities living alongside each other.

At the same time, however differing opinions and perception were evident amongst respondents, even within the religious community, supporting the argument in the literature that the 'whole truth' (Moufakkir & Reisinger 2013) can only be revealed through a deeper understanding of the local community's social world. Equally, revealing that 'truth' also necessarily requires understanding of the perceptions of the permanent tourist community (Griffiths & Sharpley 2012); hence, this research presents only a partial picture. Nevertheless, it has revealed (perhaps surprisingly) a relatively stable and harmonious relationship between the local community and permanent tourists based upon the former group's acceptance of the expectation and behaviours of the latter.

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